

CONFIDENTIALDD/A Registry
79-26309

18 October 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Task Force Report on Working Married Couples

1. On 10 October 1979, a group designated by the ADDA to review the subject report met in the DDA Conference Room. Those present were:

DD/Pers
NFAC
OGC
DDS&T
Commo
C/CMS/DDO
SSA-DDA

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2. The group reviewed the nine recommendations contained in the report. The conclusions were:

a. Recommendation No. 1. "Agency management should re-examine the need for the working married spouse going on leave without pay to sign the special "Memorandum of Understanding" as currently written, and consider treating all leave without pay situations on an equal basis within the Agency."

It was agreed that it was necessary to revise the policy guidance to place greater emphasis on a spouse's re-employment rights. This is to be a firm commitment subject to ceiling restrictions which may be imposed and medical and security considerations. It was also agreed that the Agency should discontinue carrying the spouses for several years in a relatively meaningless LWOP status. Instead, it is proposed that spouses be authorized LWOP for ninety days, and if they are not employed at the station after arrival they would go off the rolls with re-employment rights when they return to Headquarters. Re-employment would be at the same grade and in the same career service as at the time of departure, but may involve a position other than the one the spouse had before departure.

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b. Recommendation No. 2. "The Agency should establish a policy giving absolute priority on all vacancies to those employees returning from LWOP."

The solution proposed in the paragraph a. above, covers Recommendation No. 2 as well.

c. Recommendation No. 3. "The Office of Personnel should be tasked to provide information annually to the DDA which would report on the number of employees taking LWOP during that year; the number subsequently employed in the field, and in what capacity; the number who were successfully placed at Headquarters upon return from LWOP; those problems that arose in placing these employees; and any other information that would enable Agency management to assess the trends and developing problems concerning LWOP."

The Office of Personnel can assemble the information described, but it would be a time-consuming process, and it was felt that there should be some demonstrated need for the data before the Office of Personnel is asked to publish it. The need is not apparent from the text.

d. Recommendation No. 4. "The use of PRA and temporary downgrading with salary retention should be explored and encouraged in order to accommodate staff employees accompanying spouses for the duration of the sponsor's field tour."

There were differences of opinion with respect to this recommendation, and Mr. DeFelice suggested that there be additional study before a conclusion is reached. It was agreed that OGC and OP would examine the problem in more depth and that the group would meet again in ten days to consider it.

e. Recommendation No. 5. "Agency policy should direct that when a vacancy becomes available in the field both Headquarters and the Station should first review locally available personnel, i.e., Agency staffers on LWOP, Agency staffers working as contract employees, before requesting PCS staffing from Headquarters. This should include those spouses scheduled to arrive at the field location in the time frame when the position will be available."

The recommendation was accepted in principle, but with the understanding that there would be practical considerations in

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its implementation and that the components concerned would have to handle positions on a case-by-case basis.

f. Recommendation No. 6. "Spouses of Agency employees with field contract experience, upon applying for staff status at Headquarters, should be given preferential and expeditious processing through the security and medical clearances, and should have their previous experience weighted into their grade/step whenever possible."

This proposal is already Agency policy, and the components responsible for processing the applications must place more emphasis on giving preferential treatment to former employees and contract wives who are returning to Headquarters.

g. Recommendation No. 7. "A central office or reference point should be established within the Agency to collect and disseminate information related to employment in the field and to provide or arrange counseling for working married couples pursuing careers involving service in the field."

The Directorate of Operations and the Office of Communications are the components primarily concerned and they are attempting to provide the service which is proposed, and improve it if possible. It was concluded that it was not feasible to attempt to handle all requirements of the different components at one central location.

h. Recommendation No. 8. "To clarify much of the misunderstanding and confusion which many employees now have, the Office of Personnel should publish a fact sheet outlining the types of contract employment available and a brief description of each."

The Office of Personnel will publish the fact sheet, although the information is now available in regulations and handbooks.

i. Recommendation No. 9. "An Agency-wide policy statement should be published concerning the field assignments of working married couples." [A proposed statement was attached to the original study as Tab D.]

The recommendation is accepted, and the Regulations Control Branch will be asked to process the proposed Notice.

j. Recommendation No. 10. "Agency management should review the subject of nepotism within the Agency, especially in connection with the employment of spouses to the field

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where size of the post of assignment may require that one spouse supervise the other, and provide a single policy similar to that contained in DDA Administrative Notice No. 78-11 which will apply to all employees equally within the Agency."

At the present time we are not aware of any nepotism problems, and attempting to publish the proposed statement could create more problems than it would solve. The Directorate of Operations has obtained OGC concurrence on general guidelines to be followed at small stations where there are husband/wife teams, and we believe that the rights of the employees and best interests of the government are fully protected.

3. The meeting was adjourned with the understanding that the undersigned would consult the ADDA and prepare the paperwork necessary to accomplish the objective of the first two recommendations.



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